

DIRECT FROM FIELD

DISPOSAL OF A MASSIVE ELEPHANT IS ALSO A MASSIVE TASK

At night information came from staffs that an elephant found dead in the jungle near a water source. Then early morning I went there with two experienced veterinary doctors and staffs. It was my first experience to see a dead elephant in the wild. I have found a massive dead elephant lied on right lateral resemblance with her male juvenile in standing. Body of the dead elephant is found extremely swollen and putrefaction already has been started. The external orifices found infected with maggots. I came to know that this two elephant was in a herd of five individuals, other three were males. Though the doctors did not found any external injury but according to the local people one of the legs of the dead female elephant was injured for couple of weeks and her vision was also blurred, there were problems in her eyes. So her little chap (male juvenile) was carrying her from one place to another in the forest. When she got died after taking last water, the three male elephant left her, but her juvenile did not do that. He remains with his mother and tried rigorously to stand her mother again. Not for a single time he leaved her mother. But he had to do it for us.

Observation and Discussion: For post mortem purpose doctors has to go to her mother. So "Hulla-party" (a team of people with fire and crackers) drives away that little chap. But several time he chased us. But ultimately the "Hulla-party" drove him away from the site. Then veterinary doctors started their works. At first they took measurement of the animal. Then examined surface of body, body cavity, gut, sub-cutaneous area, abdominal, thoracic cavities, respiratory system, lung, liver, gall bladder, heart and surrounding blood vessels, kidney, bladder, jaw and thigh muscle, reproductive organs, head cavity and brain, digestive system (esophagus, stomach to the intestine) and collected tissue and blood samples separately for histological, pathological and toxicological tests. The preliminary diagnosis revealed that the animal may died of respiratory failure resulted from excessive pulmonary infection. I have documented all the photographic evidences of the post-mortem. Then we engaged local tribal people, Forest Protection Committee members to collect the fire wood for the cremation of the dead female elephant. As the collected fire woods are not enough to burn the elephant, that's why we have felled required number of sal trees for fire wood. As the putrefaction of the body already started and putrid smell coming out so it was a very tough job for



Dead Elephant with Juvenile Male

all of us to work there. But I astonished with the efficiency and devotion of the five people namely Sri Saheb Ram Murmu, Sri Nagen Murmu, Sri Sambhu Murmu, Sri Lalchand Murmu and Sri Bhim Murmu from forest department, who cut that dead, putrefied elephant into small pieces for ease of burning. Though it is written in one line, but it was a work of 8 hours. In the mean time two hours rain gets our job more difficult. Still we are going in the right way, but the local tribal people, FPC members stopped their work. According to them they will not burn the elephant, they will bury. And also they will not touch the dead elephant flesh. Because it is "Hati thakur" (Elephant Goddess) for them and they can't burn their Goddess. But according to the provision of the Wild Life Protection Act we have to assassinate that dead elephant by burning. So those local tribal people left their job and leaved the place. Our works got delayed. Range officer arranged those groups of people who are interested in this sort of work. And also hired a J.C.B. machine to lift those pieces of flesh upon the "shab" (structure for burning dead elephant where firewood and flesh arranged in alternate fashion). As the area having undulated topography due to hilly terrain, so it took one hour to reach and stable the J.C.B. at the site where it has to work. Then at 07:30 p.m. we are able to complete the arrangement of "shab" by flesh and firewood in alternate layer. Then kerosene, diesel, burnt Mobil poured on the "shab". Then they lit the fire at 08:00 p.m. The burning of massive elephant is required a massive time span also. The burning ended at 10:30 a.m. next day. So, total time taken was 14:30 hours. Total 44 m³ (2 truck) fire wood was burnt for complete assassination of the dead adult elephant. At night around 02:00 p.m. that male juvenile again came to find her mother and chased us, but "Hulla-

party" again drove him away.

I think that juvenile elephant is thinking that we, the human are the enemy of them. Now-a-days he is roaming in the nearby forest and chased the human being after seeing. We are continuously monitoring and watching the movement and behavior of that juvenile. But after all this massive operation I have realized that we have done one mistake. We could prepare different

"shab" for different body parts to reduce the valuable time. But none the less our job was massive to burn a massive elephant, we engaged massive man power, massive machine (J.C.B.), massive time and last but not the least massive amount of monetary cost. So truly it's a massive task. I think it was also massive for us because we have done it without any prior experience. So, we gathered massive experience also.

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SANJIT KUMAR SAHA
Assistant Divisional Forest Officer, West Bengal Forest Service
Directorate of forest, Government of West Bengal
sanjitwbfs@gmail.com

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